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County Life

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Sliding into spring
Otter life on page 4

Dancing days
Celebrating Skyline on page 7

Head Lake visitors
The return of the swan on page 11

It's officially spring, and with it, comes maple syrup season. Highlanders across the County are tapping trees for their sweet treats. /FILE

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LENNON: *Tradition*

I GUESS it's obvious where I got my name! My whole family loves music. At first I didn't notice since it felt so normal. As babies, we danced the second we learned to stand. Even our heartbeats and footsteps are rhythms. I used to think everyone played music in their kitchens, cars, earbuds, cabins, and stores. Then I noticed that some people actually aren't into it in the same way. But most kids my age know about singers with dance moves that are also *fire*.

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

I like all kinds. Operas sometimes get awkward, but I follow the stories behind them. Lately I'm actually into video game themes. I've also put The Weeknd on my playlist, plus Coldplay, and Pink Floyd. The Beatles, too, of course. I loved the soundtracks to *Stranger Things* and *Lord of the Rings*.

Although my dad plays the fiddle, and mum, the harp, and my older siblings picked accordion, mandolin and guitar, I didn't choose any of these for our family band. We're called *Branan*, which is Irish for *little raven*. All of us have shaggy black hair except for me and my grandfather. We have shaggy red hair, so we can't be called *ravens* at all! Maybe cardinals, lol. I wouldn't change my hair or freckles for the world.

Grandad plays the uilleann pipes, which are different from Scottish bagpipes. You use your elbow to keep filling the bellows, and not your mouth. Grandma and I both play the bodhrán, a big flat round skin drum you hit quickly with a small wooden *tipper*. I can't play two instruments at once, so my first choice is the tin whistle. It's sort of like a recorder, but it doesn't have a thumb hole. It's easier to carry around, and I add more power to it by *ornamenting*. That means your fingers sort of *decorate* some of the notes, adding more style by sliding, fluttering or bending them as you shift. I'm getting better all the time. People love it. I can sometimes even get them to dance in the aisles!

Miss Fields came alone to one of our church concerts on the second weekend of September. Afterwards, she stood and clapped. Then she asked about all our instruments. She said she'd always loved Celtic music, and knew where she could buy a class set of brightly-coloured D tin whistles. She'd give one to each of us if I'd show her and the class a few tunes. I explained I couldn't read music, and played every song by ear. She said it was perfectly ok, and that she'd never learned to read music either.

A Grade 6 kid teaching his whole class! I'm more excited about this than I am about our upcoming show. We'll be the special Christmas guests of the children's chorus. My buddy Jude's in that. Our parents have been friends since high school.

This town has everything for me. Music, new rugby pitch, new doctor, new poutine restaurant. I'm sticking around!

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CountyLife

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Foodland *

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Todd's Independent *

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For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

Gas and the outdoorsman

NORMALLY, WHEN someone uses the words "gas" and "outdoorsman" in the same phrase it conjures up memories that should not be reawakened.

Rest easy. That's not the type of gas I'm talking about in this column.

The one I am referring to is only slightly less toxic.

That's right, I'm talking about the gas we put in our vehicles and boats.

More specifically, this column is about what the ever-increasing price of gas at our pumps will mean to the way we pursue our outdoors activities as the year progresses.

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

The only thing the two have in common is that you worry equally about how long each crisis will last.

Let's begin by stating the obvious. The price of gas is not going to stop anyone from hunting or fishing. But it might mean that, if you get an unexpected invitation to fish from someone who normally doesn't invite you, you might be running the oars more often than you'd like.

High gas prices might also mean that when someone blindfolds you to take you to their secret brook trout fishing spot, they will have to cut back on their efforts to disorient you by only driving in circles for 15 minutes rather than the full hour. And that's probably not even a bad thing.

The point is, should these increases at the pumps continue, it will most certainly affect our activities and we should all be ready. For instance, I don't think there is anything wrong with asking important questions like, can the bicycle I plan on purchasing fit a full-sized, ten-point buck on the handlebars or will I have to buy a banana seat too? Also, should we let a few young guys join our deer camp so we can generate electricity by way of treadmills?

I think we can all agree that if gas prices continue to rise, driving way up north for a moose hunt will also pose a new set of logistical challenges. I mean does a big bull moose even fit in the back seat of a Smart Car? Or will you have to tie it to the roof?

Some of us might also be wondering if we can use a real egg beater to replace our 2 horsepower trolling motors. Yes, but it will also mean you can have pancakes for shore lunch.

Of course, there are a lot of us who are going to say that nothing is going to change and that the price of gas, whether low or high, is just the cost of doing business so to speak. And I respect that too. There's nothing wrong with getting a bank loan to finance a fishing trip. Although it does mean you probably won't be able to get another loan to purchase new gear this year.

It is very likely that this situation might keep more of us hunting and fishing closer to home – which might make the woods on Crown land a little more crowded. But that's OK too. I'm pretty sure, the average tree can hold at least four tree stands.

Despite all this, I'm sure we outdoorsmen and women will find new and creative ways to make the best of the current situation. It won't be easy and it might take a little more work, but in the end I'm certain we will find the energy to do so.

Home Hardware Building Centre - Artist of the Month
Guenter Horst

Guenter learned his trade of carpentry as a young man in Germany. In 1963 at 18 years old, he set his sights on new horizons and embarked on a five-year journey around the world. One stop Guenter would make on his travels was to meet up with his twin brother Manfred in Toronto. After a visit, Guenter told Manfred he would return next year. As promised, Guenter arrived in Montreal with big dreams and his life savings of $600 in his pocket. He was picked up by Manfred and driven back to Ontario. From there, Guenter made his permanent home in Etobicoke and began working as a cabinetmaker for an Austrian factory owner in Toronto. He enjoyed a life steeped in multiculturalism and new experiences.

Years later as a divorcee, Guenter was living in Bancroft when he met his second wife, Thea Zubyk, who had been widowed. Eventually the couple moved to their dream home in Minden in 2006 where they still reside to this day.

For your viewing pleasure, Guenter has assembled a beautiful display of handmade clocks, and other wooden decor items. His artistic journey has evolved naturally over a lifetime of craftsmanship and curiosity. Artistic talent runs in the family with his father's oil painting and his brother's photos of moose, deer, and other wildlife. Photography is another of Guenter's passions and he often submits his photos to the local papers around Haliburton County. You may have also seen Guenter on *Breakfast Television*. This prolific artist has no plans to slow down anytime soon. Come on in and visit Guenter's display beside the paint department which will be here for the entire month of March.

Colour featured, Quiet Blue

Submitted

Naturally Yours

Belly slides

ENERGY SAVING behaviour for wildlife in the winter includes the art of the snow slide. With short legs and smooth bellies, some wildlife species in the Haliburton Highlands slide on snow as a means of efficient locomotion. Usually found near water, these smooth, grooved troughs can sometimes be found in the most unlikely locations.

RICK WHITTEKER
Naturally Yours

The master of the belly slide is the northern river otter. What surprises most people is that the otter is a member of the weasel family. Bigger than a fisher and smaller than a wolverine, the otter is a creature known for its playfulness and curiosity. Researchers have documented otters climbing up and down snowy riverbanks, sliding repeatedly into the open water from the banks above. On one canoe trip, I had an otter swim on its back, following me as I paddled along – a four-legged fellow paddler.

Besides humans, otters are recognized as one of very few animals that engage in play as adults. Otters live relatively predator free and are well adapted to the winter – it is said that they are freer to frolic than most other wildlife.

Typically nocturnal in the warmer months, otters are more active during the day in the winter. Not only are they seriously cute with their long, sleek bodies, button nose and doe eyes framed by whiskers, but they also emit some endearing vocalizations including clucks, snorts, hisses, grunts and whistles. However, they are carnivores and are, quite simply, bad news for fish, clams, turtles and frogs. They will also eat snails, crayfish, insect larva and even the occasional duckling or muskrat.

Underwater acrobats, northern river otters are agile and fast in water. Their long, stiff and highly sensitive facial whiskers allow them to feel for prey in murky or dark water environs. Special flaps keep water out of their ears and nostrils and their eyes are located high on their head for surface swimming. While submerged, an extra eyelid called nictitating membrane protects their eyes still allowing them to see under water.

When the water runs low in one river, stream, pond or lake, the otter will move overland to a more productive aquatic destination. They take advantage of the slippery surface of snow and using their short, powerful hind feet to propel themselves forward, they can do this with enough force to slide up to twenty feet on flat surfaces before needing another push. Splaying out their front and back limbs or tucking them in, their streamline bodies make snow sliding energy efficient on downhills, flats and even uphill. Running and sliding, their overland journeys can take them several kilometres through forests and meadows, from one body of water to another.

Otter slides. /RICK WHITTEKER submitted

Other short-legged wildlife are also snow sliders – members of the weasel family will slide when the conditions warrant it. The American mink is a regular belly slider. With a smaller home range than the otter, you will only find mink slides near the river, stream or pond that they frequent. The average otter slide is six to twelve inches wide whereas the trough the mink leaves behind is three to five inches.

Beavers are also known to be sliders. Their terrestrial movements are usually near their lodges and food caches as they are not as inquisitive or active in the winter as mink and otters. They do not need to hunt for their food – they have already cached all they need to survive the winter. Beavers are rodents so they are less able to defend themselves, so forays outside of the safety of water are high risk ventures. Wolves and coyotes have been known to lurk patiently near pond-side beaver trails for the opportunity of attack when the beaver is most vulnerable.

The width of belly slides are similar for both beavers and otters. Examining the prints within the trough will give you the necessary clues to be able to confirm which animal is on the move. A beaver's hind feet are almost six inches long and noticeably webbed. Often beaver tracks appear undefined due to the tendency to drag their beefy tail behind them when sliding. An otter track is smaller with less pronounced webbed feet. The baseline gait of an otter is a two-by-two lope or bounding gait, so they often leave behind side-by-side footprints – distinctly different from the typical waddling walking pattern of beavers.

As the snow starts to recede and the wildlife tracks fade, the deep imprint of belly slides remain, so watch for these unique belly slides on the snowy Highlands landscape during your late winter wanderings.

The Haliburton County Home Builders' Association is offering a Job Fair day at HHSS for students attending the Haliburton County Schools. Looking for employers to participate!

JOB FAIR DAY 2026

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Haliburton Highlands
Secondary School Gym

HHSS RED HAWKS

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This is not a 'trade' only Job Fair. We would like to include as many businesses as possible from across Haliburton County. We will also have outdoor space available for any participants who would like to bring larger tools or equipment. The more interactive your space is, the more engaged the students will be.

To book your space contact Aggie Tose at 705-457-6901 or by email at info@hchba.ca

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I Stand on Guard for Thee

IRV HANDLER
County Life Contributor

As Canadians we have a shared experience of our relationship with the United States. Many Canadians have friends and relatives living in the States. Most of us grew up watching American television, listening to American music on the radio and vacationing in the States. This makes the current souring of our relationship with the States all the more painful.

My own relationship with the United States began on my fifth birthday. My favourite aunt lived in New York and sent me a birthday card containing a crisp new American five-dollar bill. When I took the five dollars to the bank, I had my first experience in American exceptionalism. Through some alchemy of American financial might, my U.S. five-dollar bill was magically converted to $5.35 in Canadian money. America was truly a special place. The magic was repeated whenever my aunt made her infrequent visits to Toronto. She always came bearing gifts of clothes, toys and treats unavailable in Canada. My favourite was Fruit Striped Gum. The treat was a perfect representation of everything the United States stood for. It was colourful and sweet with a cool cartoon mascot but lacking any nutritional value. It was the ultimate disposable product as its flavour would start to fade in as little as 30 seconds. But I loved it, partially because it was initially unavailable in Canada. Sadly, the product was discontinued in 2024, another sign of America's long slow decline.

I grew up during the so-called British invasion of Pop music and so it was television rather than the radio that provided me with my primary window into American culture. Which is not to say that American music did not have a major impact on me. The Beach Boys influenced the location of my first summer vacation as a university student. I spent the summer on a beach in California learning to surf and dreaming of being a Hollywood star.

Notwithstanding the Beach Boys, the epitome of American culture, to a young boy growing up in Canada, was Disneyland. How I longed to be part of a culture that could produce such a wonder. But my family was of modest means and I did not make it down to Disneyland until my aforementioned Beach Boy trip. Until that time, I had to make due with Uncle Walt introducing each episode of The Wonderful World of Disney from the grounds of his park every Sunday night.

As I grew, American television grew with me. Disney led to *Gillian's Island*, *The Beverley Hillbillies* and the *Monkees*. As television matured, its themes began to appeal to more a more mature audience from *Three's Company* to *Hill Street Blues*, *Thirtysomething* and the *West Wing*. Through it all, the United States still seemed to set a moral standard that Canada and the world strived to emulate. But the cracks were already starting to show.

On display on American television was the best and the worst of the United States. For every magnificent Moon Landing, there was the equal but opposite horridness of the Vietnam War. America seemed to be a balancing act between its two natures. Canadians always wanted to believe that America's better nature would prevail. They were the good guys and we were their pals.

But with each new generation of leaders, America's worse nature became ever more entrenched. America no longer seemed to be the land of opportunity. It was no longer something to be emulated.

Which leads us to our current state of affairs. As our Prime Minister has said, the United States no longer seems to adhere to our common rule-based system of laws both within their own borders and on the international stage. Things have gotten so tense that the Canadian Military developed a theoretical model for our response to a hypothetical U.S. invasion of Canada. I have often joked that Canada could not withstand a determined attack by the Buffalo police force. It turns out that I was not far off the mark. Our military planners predict that American forces would be able to conquer Canada within a week and possibly as quickly as two days. That truly would be a long weekend. In this scenario, Canada's contingency plan is to fight an unconventional guerilla warfare using small groups of irregular military and civilian partisan groups to engage in ambushes, sabotage and hit-and-run tactics. That's where I come in.

Following a 40-year career as a Bay Street banker, I retired to the woods of the Haliburton Highlands to become an avid hiker. I spent the first years of my retirement exploring all the many hiking trails that criss-cross our expansive county. In the past year I began to take my hiking more seriously, becoming a Certified Hike Leader and joining the Management Committee of my local hiking club, the Haliburton Highland Trekkers. In the unlikely (I hope) event of an American invasion, I believe that the Canadian Military will be looking for partisans who are intimately familiar with our Canadian forests. To find these types of rugged patriots, the Military would likely contact local outdoors clubs like the Trekkers. If so, I am ready, willing and able to do my duty. I know the terrain, I have the stamina for a long hike and I am eager to defend my home on native land.

In the meanwhile, I remain in training. If needed, you can find me in the woods, hiking with my elbows up.

The importance of critical thinking

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

MY BROTHER Steve is well known for his temper, not in a volatile way, but in a short on patience with the whole world kind of way. He was telling me about his awful night where his outdoor woodstove kept going out. His exact words were: "I would have lit the whole thing on fire out of frustration except that was the very thing that was wrong."

It reminded me of a story of my childhood, when my dad lost his cool and inflicted hundreds of dollars of damage on a tractor when he could not repair something simple. I think we all have these "burn it down" moments of frustration.

When we suddenly get so bogged down in our problem that our reactions become out of step with the solution and in step with the emotions of the heightened frustration. For Steve's woodstove, he established that he had tried to take a short cut on misshapen wood chunks, but as they burned, large gaps were created, stopping the wood from combusting.

Emotions, as they say, are not all good or all bad. There are lots of times where a good flash of anger uses up some energy that can then offer a calm to look at the issue a different way. The challenge is to do what we need to for problem solving, burning it down often sets us back further away from the solution or resolution, burning up our critical thinking. Causing a gap, and prolonging the dark night.

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Send your letters to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

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Toddler time

MY SON turned two at the beginning of this month.

And while I was prepared for the big day, the shedding of the last leaves of babyhood still hit me like a rock.

Gone are the days of milky snuggles and wrinkly toes.

As I write these lines, I am instantly transported back. To those first few months, first few days, first few hours. The way his tiny finger curled around my thumb, his bright eyes seeing the world for the first time.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

And while I miss those days gone by, this age has proven beautiful in all the messiest of ways. We're knee-deep in finger paints and mud, train tracks and race cars.

It seems fast. Like I blinked one day, and my little ball of a baby unfurled into a beautiful boy. He's developed a sense of humour, an empathy for animals, a contagious joy that follows him wherever he goes.

So how is it that time skips a beat with the pace of my heart, whilst simultaneously dragging at a glacial rate?

We're officially on toddler time. Where eating meals, getting in the car, or even walking from Point A to Point B feels like it takes an eternity.

And with the pace of the world these days, by comparison, toddler time literally is an eternity.

We have news accessible with the click of a button, doctors notes prescribed by robots. Science, technology, careers, stories; they're all built with one thing in mind: a race to the finish line that never appears. A far-off mirage that promises peace, but we never quite make it.

I'm not sure when the pace of professionalism kicks in. The urgency that hangs from life like a chain we can't break. When did we start to rush rush rush?

Was it when we were kids? Shuttled from one place to another in an effort to attain good grades, excel at sports, or find our footing before the age of 20?

Or does the chain tighten as we enter adulthood? The need to whittle and carve at a career that puts dollars in an account that we will never see; staving our stores until the bell tolls.

The never-ending rat race of urgency can loom over our days like a wiry umbrella. It's ever-present in a capitalistic society that prides itself on punctuality, rewards itself for running ragged.

Unless, you're on toddler time.

Every day, I feel rushed. Never enough time in the morning, noon, and night for me to check off the to-do list that regenerates itself like a lost limb.

But the other day, while I was loading up the car, trying desperately to get from Point A to Point B, I turned to see my son squatting down in the driveway. While my first thought was frustration, the weight of the chain playing heavy on my chest, the feeling quickly softened.

Because my son had found a small stick. It was buried in the mud. He was dragging it through puddles, making little rivers that weaved and wandered through the newly-exposed earth. He was creating his own little world, and before anything else - before deadlines and timelines and guidelines - he was present.

While life has a habit of happening fast, toddlers will slow you down.

In every beautifully messy way they can.

And I think that's the whole point.

Top 10 reasons why I wouldn't want to be a vampire

I HAVE always been fascinated by vampire movies. Better yet, I have learned a lot from them. First and foremost is the importance of taking good dental care. Next, I would never want to be a vampire. Here are my top 10 reasons why.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. Too many tax seasons when you live for eternity.
2. Biting some stranger's neck without consent is a surefire way to get cancelled.
3. More of a Team Jacob guy.
4. The only way they die is with a spike through the heart or on open mc night.
5. Love my garlic way too much.
6. Have you ever tried shaving without the use of a mirror.
7. Good luck getting a dental appointment after sundown.
8. I don't even like blood pudding.
9. Could not pull off the Transylvanian accent.
10. You look like the glutton whenever there is a reunion of everyone you ever bit.

March

Blur of grey birds chirping in the branches of a bare tree,
enlivening it with notes of their morning song, fragile as the icicles dripping from the eaves onto Snow,
hints of winter withering, as Air breathes, warmed on this one day by slants of sunlight sliding down from a mottled Sky,
spilling onto boulders of Snow that melt into puddles on the side of the road, reflecting the skeletons of sepia trees,
where birds, tiny as burrs, land on the barbed wires of their branches, their chirps smearing Air as I stare up at a tree,
the lone anomaly standing among these bare winter trees, never having shed its leaves,
its branches rustling as a sudden gust of Wind sweeps past, rippling through the brown leaves
that still dangle from its branches, dry as parchment,
as my fingers reach up to feel one of the leaves,
its stem, sturdy, stlll clinging to it twig, the shape of the leaf resembling an oak, as I stroke its brittle skin,
expecting it to crumble in my hand like dust, but there it remains, on the branch of its tree,
among a forest of other brown leaves whose stems never loosened and fluttered to the ground,
only a few stray leaves speckling Snow, and I wonder how new leaves will bud and grow on its branches
if the old leaves still cling, whether spring Winds will come and sweep them away, or torrents of Rain that last for days,
seizing the leaves from their branches, making room for the new leaves to unfurl into the world,
I cup my face up towards Sky, to feel the fleeting warmth of Sun, close my eyes to listen to the chirping of birds,
winter still burrowed deep inside me, my body waiting for the thaw, to peel off at least a single layer of sweater or fleece
and inhale Air that invigorates my spirit, like the warbling of these small grey birds,
blurring into the bark and branches of winter trees,
the brown-leafed tree, standing among them, Wind soughing in its branches like the sound of the sea,
and flutters of hope that spring will soon arrive,
swell inside me, as I stomp through puddles that yesterday were Snow,
knowing that this one warm March day won't last
and winter won't retreat without dueling with spring,
its surrender still weeks away as it blasts the earth
and Air, Wind's fury raging as the trees quiver and their branches sway,
the wrath of Wind and freezing Rain, maybe finally severing the brown leaves from the lone anomaly of a tree,
so fresh leaves can have space to grow, the boulders of Snow melting into puddles along the side of the road,
freezing into sheets of ice as winter clings, marching towards spring without relinquishing its reign,
I fling off the top layer of my winter armour, how much lighter I feel, unraveling the scarf from my neck,
feeling Air graze its flesh for the first time in months, wondering whether the birds feel it too, on this one warm day in March,
as their feathers flutter from branch to branch,
chirping in the bare crowns of trees, sharing Air with other birds,
serenading morning with their song as icicles drip from the eaves, and the anomaly of a tree that never shed its leaves,
waits for Winds and Rain to come to make room for tendrils of new Life to spring.

Sylvie Kalenda

Dance all day

Skyline Dance Studios wowed audiences the first weekend of March with their annual showcase; a glimpse of their competitive dancers, who are headed off to all parts of Ontario this spring for competitions. The showcase allows locals to see the hard work the dancers have been doing since the start of the season, and to cheer on the many participants who are performing.

/TIM YANO staff photographer

Textile Recycling

Along with donating gentlyusedclothingtotheHaliburton4CsLily Ann Thrift Store and the SIRCHCommunityServicesThriftWarehouse, Dysart ratepayers can drop off textilesforrecyclingatHaliburton,Harcourt, Kennisis Lake, West Bay, andWestGuilfordLandfillsduringregular operating hours.

Place textiles in clear bags to help keep materials dry.

☑ **Items you wear "head to foot" (including undergarments)**

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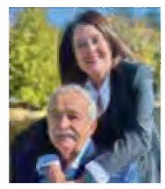

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John Parish 705-457-5485
Marj Parish 705-455-2211
Sales Representatives

0 SPRING VALLEY ROAD $159,000

- Scenic .33 acre level lot with 103 ft frontage on the beautiful Gull River
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- Enjoy sandy shoreline entry, gentle river flow, and direct access to Gull Lake for excellent swimming boating & fishing

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cherylsmithremax.com

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- 5.93 acres, picturesque pond nice building location on east side of pond
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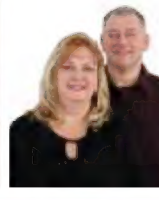

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3072 GELERT ROAD $575,000

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Terry Carr & Drew Staniforth
Sales Representatives
705-935-1011
MovingTheHighlands.com

Minden Home

- 2 bdrm starter/retirement home
- Level lot with great backyard privacy
- Some new painting upgrades & new living room floor
- Propane fireplace & walkout to deck off living room
- 2 blocks to downtown Minden
- All amenities very close by

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Deb Lambe
Sales Representative
705-854-0103
debra.lambe@gmail.com

SPRING HOP

JOIN US SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH

WHAT FREE Easter fun for all ages!
WHEN 12-3PM Mar 28
WHERE Head Lake Park, Haliburton

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Face Painting
- Colouring Station
- Pics with the Easter Bunny
- Easter Crafts
- and much, much more!

THIS IS A RAIN, SNOW, OR SHINE EVENT!

A fuzzy friend of ours has also promised a visit...

Hop on over and **Meet the Easter Bunny!**

We'll also be collecting monetary and non-perishable donations for the **Haliburton 4 C's Food Bank** to support local families in need.

REMAXPROFESSIONALSNORTH.CA

Make sure to follow us for updates! professionalsnorth

RE/MAX Professionals North, Brokerage will be at the Spring Cottage Life Show.
March 26 - 29

SPRING Cottage Life SHOW

If you are thinking of selling your property this is a great opportunity to promote it. Contact a local RE/MAX agent for more details.

The great Ontario trumpeter swan comeback

ADAM FRISK
Special to County Life

A family of trumpeter swans paid a visit to Head Lake in Haliburton Village late last month. /submitted by Adam Frisk

In the late 1800s, the trumpet of the swan went silent across Ontario.

After decades of being hunted for meat, feathers, and even their feet, which were fashioned into purses, the last recorded wild trumpeter swan in the province was shot at Long Point.

Fast forward to 2026, and the story has taken a dramatic, hopeful turn. Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers and a visionary biologist, Ontario's trumpeter swan population has rebounded to approximately 3,500 birds and continues to grow.

As a native species, they were once found in vast numbers, but Hudson's Bay Company historical records show that a staggering 108,000 pelts were shipped back to the U.K.

"All parts of the bird were used," Susan Best, president of Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario, explained in a recent telephone interview. "There are 30,000 feathers on a trumpeter swan ... they were obviously used for warmth, there was a lot of meat, but there were more frivolous uses. The feet are very large and black, and they made ladies' purses out of them."

Beyond fashion, the birds were essential to the literary world.

"A lot of the authors of the time in the U.K. would only use trumpeter swan quills because it was the best quality quill that you could get for writing," Best said.

By the 1970s, only 69 birds remained in eastern North America, with a mere 16 of breeding age, Best said.

The restoration effort was led by Harry Lumsden, a biologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources who died recently at age 99. Unable to afford captive birds, Lumsden secured permission to harvest 50 eggs from Alaska. He recruited 22 "co-operator farmers" to raise the hatchlings for two years, ensuring they were robust and disease-free before release.

To decide where the birds should go, Lumsden turned to history.

"He combed historic diaries," said Best. "He found out that the Jesuits wrote about trumpeter swans in huge numbers ... he used that data, and he released them."

Today, the program is run entirely by volunteers. They use yellow wing tags that are large enough to be read from 100 to 150 feet away to track individual birds.

While the population is sustainable, new human-led challenges have emerged.

Lead remains the single greatest threat. Swans are "tip-feeders," scavenging for vegetation in shallow water. In doing so, they often accidentally swallow lead sinkers and lures.

"It's a tragic death. It's a neurological death; it's absolutely horrible," Best said. "They shake their head, they stop grooming, they stop waterproofing, and they can't stand up.

"Go through your tackle box. Get the lead out," she said.

While they look graceful, Best urged the public to resist feeding the birds.

"If you love them enough to feed them, love them enough not to," the Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario president said.

Best noted that feeding creates "trick-or-treaters, "birds that lose their natural foraging instincts and congregate in large groups, increasing the risk of disease transmission.

"Natural forage is always the best. They do not need to be fed," she said.

It is easy to confuse the native trumpeter with the introduced mute swan, though their temperaments differ wildly.

"The trumpeters tend to be friendly," Best said. "We have very few anecdotal stories of a trumpeter ever being aggressive ... It's usually only when they're nesting. Then all bets are off. They could drown a dog or tip your canoe. Don't mess with the nest."

If you spot a swan with a yellow wing tag, report the sighting via eBird, iNaturalist, or the Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario Facebook group.

As a registered charity, the group also relies on donations via Canada Helps to cover the high costs of lead-poisoning rehabilitation.

"It's nice to see them back in the environment," Best said. "They are our birds."

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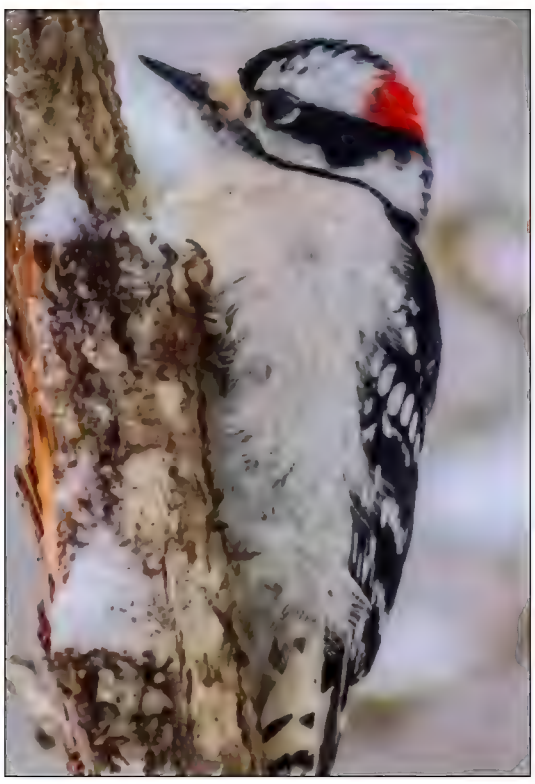
Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

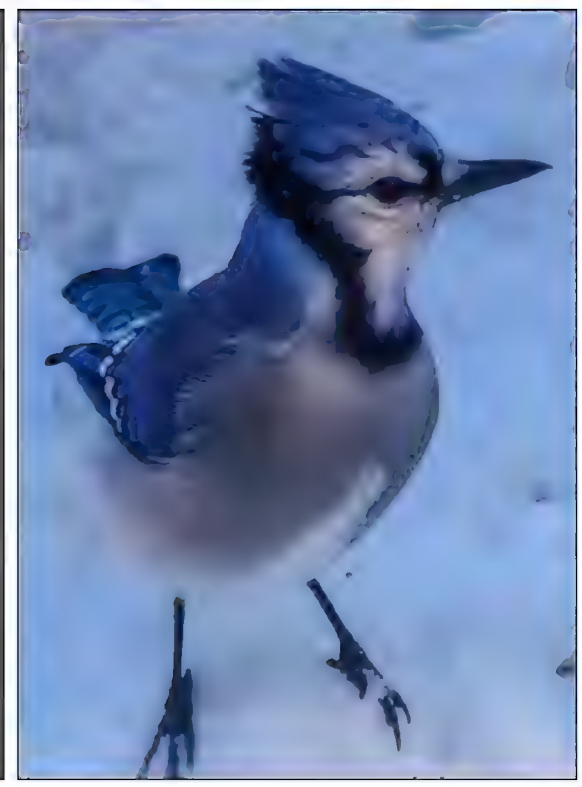
Beautiful Fisher by Tammy Nash

A visitor by Debi Ireland



Male Downy Woodpecker by Jill Moulton

Swan by Tammy Nash



Blue Jay by Jill Moulton

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m., Card night 7 p.m.
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5 p.m.
Special events:
2nd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary - 11 a.m.
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
Last Sunday of the month - All you can eat breakfast
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices.
Email: 441RCL@gmail.com Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice.
Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Special Events Only, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 7 p.m.
Sundays: March 29 Cribbage Tournament. Registration is at 10 a.m.
Mondays: March 23, 30 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Tuesdays: March 24, 31 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: March 25 - Darts $5/player 2 p.m. Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m. – No need to pre-register
Thursdays: March 12, 26 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
Friday: March 20 Fish and Chips 1pc/$15, 2pc/$20. 5 to 8 p.m. Karaoke 6:30 to 10:30 p.m.
March 13, 27 Wings and Jam Session $15/lb. 5 to 8 p.m.
Community Care 55+ Lunch $20. 12 p.m.
Saturdays: March 21, 28 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
March 28 Nacho Average Trivia Registration is at 6:30 p.m. Game Begins at 7 p.m. Sharp. $5/Player
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-222

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Wanted: scrap cars and trucks. Cash paid. Please call **705-286-3758** or **cell 249-332-1212**

After School Helper/Nanny needed for busy Haliburton family! Flexible, organized, child-focused multitasker required. Monday to Friday, Approx. 2:30-7:30 pm. Join our family team. Email alicia@mindenah.com

COMING EVENTS

Stained Glass Workshops. From beginner up. Registration open now. Learn the art of stained glass. Call Tom for details. 705-286-3628

FOR RENT

Basement apartment for rent,1 bdrm, full kitchen including dishwasher, 1 x 3 piece bath. Freshly painted, bright and spacious with personal laundry and infloor heating. NOTE:There are two sets of stairs to the apartment All inclusive rent of $1800 covers heat/ A/C, hydro, septic, water, internet, lawn care and snow removal. Between Haliburton and Gooderham on Glamorgan Rd. Available now. Call or text for more info **705-306-0581**

Newly renovated 2-unit house on 9.5 scenic acres near Haliburton. LOWER: 1-bed, 1-bath. Features open-concept living, new appliances, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces. 10 minutes from Haliburton & perfect for peaceful living. Contact: info@aboveboardcarpentry.com **705-455-2196**

Spacious one bedroom, one bath lower apartment located in the heart of Minden. The apartment provides a perfect blend of town and country living. Features include front door access, open concept living, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces, internet and preferential parking spots. $1,875 All inclusive plus shared hydro. Please Contact: **647-394-4899**. Photos available upon request.

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COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT

Fitness Room for rent: Blue Sky Yoga Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright & Open in Downtown Haliburton with Private entrance and washroom. **Health Professional/Therapist treatment room for rent** at Haliburton Chiropractic. Furnished with massage table, desk & chair. Available by the hour, half or full day. Contact: 705-457-3500. info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

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GET IT online www.haliburtonecho.ca www.mindentimes.ca

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Seedy Saturday
When: March 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Centre Upper Level, 55 Markside St.
Minden & District Horticultural Society will be hosting their first ever "Seedy Saturday" with a seed exchange, demonstrations, vendor booths, advice clinic and kid's activities. See our website for updated information.

Nocturnal Insects: Fireflies and Moths
When: April 7, 1 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Centre, 55 Parkside St. Minden
Thinking gardening this spring? Join the Minden & District Horticultural Society to learn about "Nocturnal Insects: Fireflies and Moths" guest speaker Kathleen Patnode followed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome!

Recurring events

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly
When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of $59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Bridge for Seniors
When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Duplicate Bridge - Please arrange for a partner.
When: Wednesdays at 12:45 at Park Lane Apartments.
Fridays at 12:45 at Haliburton Legion, Schofield Room.

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street

Monthly Community Breakfast
When: Fourth Saturday of Every Month from 9-11am
Where: Fellowship Room, Haliburton United Church, 10 George St. Haliburton
Hosted by North Entrance Masonic Lodge and Haliburton United Church. This is intended to bring together members of the community for good food and fellowship. No fixed cost for attending the breakfast. Donations are warmly welcomed and will be put to meaningful use supporting local initiatives. A portion of the proceeds collected from the breakfast will be donated to the Public School Breakfast Program in Haliburton County, helping to ensure that local students start their day with a nutritious meal.

Highlands Little Theatre Presents

Calendar Girls

By Tim Firth

Based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

Directed by Jack Brezina

March 24th, 25th, 27th at 7pm and March 28th at 2pm

Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion

A hilarious and heartwarming show about love, friendship and the power of a great idea!

Featuring: Norma Bingham, Elyse Boisvert, Kate Butler, Karen Frybort, Renée Griffith, Kate Hall, John Jackson, Rita Jackson, Christine Jonas-Simpson, Jordan Kovacs, Cathy McIlmurray, Elizabeth Oakley and David Zilstra

Scan for tickets!

Tickets: $25

www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/calendar-girls-tuesday-march--24
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www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/calendar-girls-friday-march--27
www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/calendar-girls-saturday-march-28-matinee

"Calendar Girls" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc
www.concordtheatricals.com

Highlands Little Theatre is a proud part of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative.

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The Times

Minden

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Monday, March 17, 1997

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An early Sunday morning blaze has left four families without a place to live and gutted one of Minden's older houses.

The fire, in the first house on Orde Street, (immediately behind the Tastee Treat), was reported at about 6 a.m. According to Katie Perry, one of the tenants of the four apartments in the house, she heard a loud noise or explosion, "...and then smoke started pouring through the registers."

She quickly got dressed and fled the building after alerting other tenants. The residents escaped with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Items left behind were either destroyed by the flames or sustained smoke and water damage.

Fire Chief Bill Hogg said, at the scene, it was too early to determine the cause, but he thought it started at the back of the building. The firefighters had difficulty getting to the heart of the blaze because of the age of the building and the many renovations which had taken place over the years. The building is believed to be over 100 years old. Firefighters were also hampered by the chilly temperatures as they attempted to extinguish the blaze.

Left homeless were Tina Trumbull, Charles Kent, Nick George and Tammy Madill and their son, and Katie Perry and Cameron Dydyk. The house is owned by Jimmy Walker of Minden.

No estimate of loss was available. No one was hurt in the blaze.

Snowdon council states its terms

by Jerry Grozelle

Snowdon Township's vision of county restructuring was a hot topic of discussion at both the Stanhope and Anson, Hindon and Minden council meetings last week. Earlier this month, members of Snowdon council were set to pass a resolution calling in a provincial commissioner to deal with municipal restructuring in the county. But elected officials from eight of the other nine municipalities attended the Snowdon meeting and convinced the elected officials to delay any action. The council agreed to a 60-day delay, with the understanding that a plan of action would be developed for the county. As well, Snowdon council was asked to clearly identify its concerns. It was this list of concerns and calls for action, which sparked debate in the other councils this past week.

Apparently dissatisfied with the progress the county was making with regard to restructuring, Snowdon reeve George Simmons announced at the February county council meeting that Snowdon would likely be requesting a provincial restructuring commissioner to examine the Haliburton County situation and make a ruling regarding the status of municipal government. Calling in a commissioner would effectively take the decision-making process out of the hands of the municipalities within Haliburton County. Any decision from the commissioner would be binding on all parties and could not be challenged. Naturally, that ultimatum did not sit well with the other municipal officials.

See also:
■ Snowdon's demands — page 2

In general, the members of the two councils who met this week felt they were already working toward a goal of streamlining operations and making municipal and county operations leaner and more efficient. Negotiations between municipalities have been taking place for several months in an attempt to reach agreement on sharing services, personnel and equipment.

After perusing copies of what Snowdon Township council outlined as objectives, members of both Anson, Hindon and Minden and Stanhope councils responded by saying that the goals expressed in the document are virtually identical to those which the municipalities have undertaken.

"We are currently working toward those items," Stanhope reeve Jock Mavor said at last Wednesday's meeting. "I don't see any problem with anything they (Snowdon council members) have specified."

Councillor Ann Barker was concerned that "one council in the county is dictating to the rest."

"It may be a little heavy handed," Mavor said, "but I concur with the content. They want some positive action."

Anson, Hindon and Minden deputy-reeve Jerry Rome commented: "Ninety per cent of what they are saying is being looked at."

Reeve Jeanne Anthon wondered aloud if all of Snowdon councillors are aware of the progress that is being made

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Minden woman survives lake plunge

by Andrew Milne

A Minden woman had a close call recently when the snow machine she was riding plunged into the water of Twelve Mile Lake March 7.

Terry Lynn Fairey — an RPN at Minden hospital — guesses she was in the frigid water around fifteen minutes while Barry Thompson — a friend who had been riding on another machine — fought to pull her out.

Fairey believes she owes her life to Thompson, who struggled alone at the edge of the ice in the darkness to rescue her even after she'd given up hope.

"I told him actually I didn't think I could swim any more, and just to let me go. But he wouldn't — he just kept me kicking and going."

Thompson himself also slid briefly into the water while trying to pull Fairey out, but was able to roll himself back onto the ice.

Finally, says Fairey, she was able to kick just hard enough to get partially on top of a broken piece of ice, and Thompson was able to roll her onto solid ice.

Cottagers nearby on the lake had arrived by the time Thompson got Fairey out of the water, and took her to a cottage to warm up, and then by 4x4 to the landing.

Fairey wasn't a regular snowmobiler. Saturday was only her second time on a machine. She and Thompson became lost, she says, in the gloom, and accidentally went into thewater at the narrows.

Fairey

Thompson

Says Fairey, "I lost his taillight. And I think he wasn't sure where he was... Then I lost where I was... I realized I was on open water, and I gave it the gas so I could get over to where the ice was and the machine could start to pull, but the ice just kept breaking."

She guesses the place where the machine went in was about the middle of the lake, just where the narrows

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